

# Congressional Notes



## Quick Tips That Can Save Your Constituents \$ 900 Pay-Per-Call and Other Information Services

*A simple telephone call can put sports news at your constituents' finger tips or provide them instant access to a psychic -- but such information services are rarely free.*

- ☛ Carefully review telephone bills every month and challenge incorrect charges for 900 number and other types of information service calls.
- ☛ Be suspicious of offers for free calls or services. If it sounds too good to be true -- it probably is. 900 number programs always involve charges to the caller. Information services are rarely free even if they are provided over toll-free numbers.
- ☛ Educate children and other individuals who make phone calls from their line about the charges for calls placed to information services.
- ☛ Carefully read advertisements for information services. Some information service advertisements do not disclose the charges for calling the advertised numbers.
- ☛ Listen carefully to the preamble or introductory message when calling a 900 number or other type of information service number. Immediately hang up when not interested in the service or when not wanting to pay charges for the call.
- ☛ Be cautious when calling an information service that advertises "Ordinary Toll Rates Apply" or "International Toll Rates Apply." The toll rates of some telephone companies involved in transmitting information services may exceed the rates of your constituents' long distance company. Also, the international rates of their preferred long distance company may be higher than expected for information service calls.
- ☛ Understand that calls placed to numbers with 809, 758 or 664 area codes or to numbers beginning with "011" will be billed as international toll calls or possibly "calling card" calls.
- ☛ Ask their local telephone company if 900 number blocking service is available in their area, and their local and long distance companies about blocking toll or international calls if they want to secure their phone lines against the placement of these types of calls.
- ☛ Think twice before requesting a return call. Some information service companies use this option for callers to receive information. If this option is selected and the call is returned, your constituents may be charged for a collect call.